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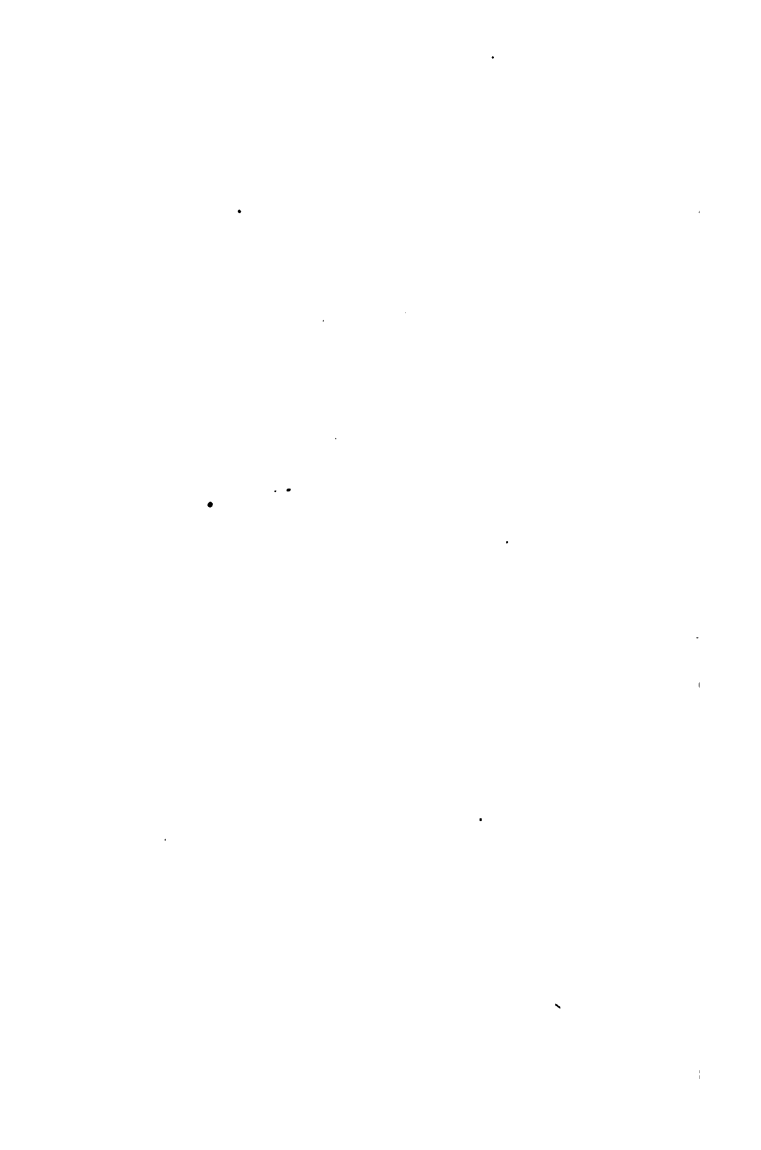
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A MANUAL  
OF  
APOCALYPTIC INTERPRETATION,  
OR  
SHORT EXPOSITION OF THE PROPHECIES  
OF THE  
REVELATION OF ST. JOHN,  
AND OF  
THEIR HISTORICAL FULFILMENT UP TO THE PRESENT TIME,  
ACCORDING TO THE MOST APPROVED COMMENTATORS.

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"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand."—*Chap. i.*, 3.

"Surely I come quickly."—*Chap. xxi.*, 20.

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C. T. JEFFERIES, REDCLIFF STREET.  
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1851.

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THIS little publication is designed to afford to those who have not the opportunity of consulting larger volumes, some knowledge of the wonderful light which has been thrown, especially of late years, on the apocalyptic signs of the times, and the nearness of the Saviour's coming and kingdom. Never was it more necessary for men to be aware of the real position and prospects of the two great parties of Christ and Antichrist, of the true church and the false one, than in the present days: and, if any reader, by reflecting on what is here written, shall be led to take his stand more decidedly on the Lord's side, the object of the writer shall be fully answered.

It is almost needless to add, that there is claim made for little or nothing that is original in the following pages. The general principles of the interpretation are derived from Joseph Mede, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, but especially, and above all, from a living author, the Rev. E. B. Elliott, whose praise is in all the churches, and whose valuable "*Horæ Apocalypticæ*" almost supersedes every other work in the clear elucidation of the Revelation of St. John.



## A SHORT EXPOSITION OF THE PROPHECIES OF ST. JOHN.

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THE Book of Revelation, or the Apocalypse, consists of a series of prophetic visions vouchsafed to St. John during his imprisonment in the Isle of Patmos, whither he had been banished as a martyr for the cause of Christ. We are informed by the testimony of the early christian writers, particularly of Irenæus, who lived immediately after the apostle's time, that this banishment occurred towards the end of the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian, the last of the twelve Cæsars; and that the date of the book is, therefore, to be fixed about the year A.D. 96; that is, about sixty years after the crucifixion of our Lord, and twenty-five after the destruction of Jerusalem. He who was the beloved disciple, that leaned on Jesus' breast, having lived to extreme old age and survived all his brethren, had the high honour assigned him in his lonely prison-house of completing the canon of scripture by this series of wonderful prophecies, unfolding the history of the church and of the world from the period in which he wrote till the end of time, and of sealing up the sum of divine revelation with a most solemn denunciation against any man who should hereafter add to, or take away from, the perfect volume of God's holy word.



It is to be observed, in the very outset, that the prophecies of this book are delivered not in *literal*, but in *symbolic*, or *emblematic* language. The distinction is obvious, and must be carefully attended to; and in order that it may be the better understood, a few examples suggest themselves. When Isaiah prophesied that "a virgin should conceive and bear a son," a glance at the context is sufficient to show that the words must be taken literally, as part of a prediction which was to be all literally accomplished: but when St. John prophesies (in Rev. xii.) "of a woman who cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered," it is easily seen that the passage throughout is incapable of a literal fulfilment, and must be symbolically explained, according to the ascertained meaning of the emblems employed. Again, when our Saviour says, in foretelling his own resurrection, that in "three days he should rise again;" the word "day" is plainly used in its literal sense: but when St. John (in Rev. xi.) says that the "witnesses should prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sack-cloth;" the same word must be figuratively understood, as denoting an extended period of time. And again, when St. Paul (in 1st Tim. iv.) makes mention of an apostacy that was to arise, "giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving"—here all is manifestly literal, and to be literally fulfilled: but when St. John (in Rev. xiii.) speaks of the same apostate body as "doing great wonders, and making fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of

men;" and in another place represents it as a "woman sitting on a scarlet-coloured beast, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications"—here all is as manifestly symbolical, and must be symbolically interpreted. The attentive reader of the Bible can scarcely fail to discover from the plain connection and stile of each portion of the sacred writings, what is literal and what is not. Thus, in the dreams of Joseph, and of Pharaoh and his servants, in Genesis, who can fail at once to perceive that the "sheaves," the "sun, moon, and stars," the three budding "branches of the vine," the three emptied "baskets of baked meats," and the "seven well-flavoured kine and good ears" on the one hand, and the "seven ill-flavoured kine and blasted ears" on the other, were all employed symbolically to signify things that were coming to pass? In the prophecies of Daniel also, it is plain to every reader, that the visions of Nebuchadnezzar's great image, and of the four great beasts which the prophet describes, were symbolical representations of future events. So that we are prepared for meeting in the Revelation of St. John a series of symbols unveiling the secrets of futurity, not in plain literal statements of matters of fact, but in emblematic imagery. And the prophecies, thus written, as it were, in hieroglyphics, and couched under similitudes which "none of the wicked shall understand, but which the wise shall understand," whilst they neither interfere with the free agency of men, nor afford any ground for the infidel remark that they cause their own fulfilment, carry the evidences of their divine origin more manifestly along with them, and constrain all who witness their accomplishment, and are not



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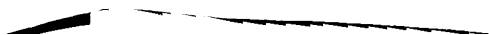
him who sits upon the throne, before whose presence angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, bow in adoration, and go forth on their errands of ministry, executing the divine purposes whether of judgment or of mercy towards mankind.

We shall commence with an exposition of the sixth chapter, as being the first in which any distinct development is given of those future events which the prophet was commissioned to unfold.

## PART I.

### THE VISION OF THE SEALS—CHAPTER VI. VII.

Under the emblem of a SEVEN SEALED BOOK, which none in heaven or earth could open, but only "*the Lamb that was slain, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David,*" is presented the first great act in the drama of divine providence about to be accomplished in respect of the world, or rather that portion of it to which the prophecies of the Revelation have reference. It may be asked what is that portion? We answer, the Roman world—that region of the earth which, in the time of our Saviour and his apostles, was the seat of dominion, and civilisation, and learning; outside of which all were counted barbarians, and within which, wherever the eagle-standard of imperial Rome floated in the wind, all that is interesting and important in the history of our race at that time was included. We must bear in mind that the prophecies of the Bible, from first to last, refer to four great monarchies that were to arise on earth in succession, holding dominion over the principal parts of the habitable globe, and connected with the church of God by ties, not of sympathy and kindness, but on the contrary, of oppression and persecution. These monarchies are specifically mentioned in the second and fourth



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chapters of Daniel—1st, the Assyrian or Babylonian\*—2nd, the Medo-Persian—3rd, the Grecian—and 4th, the Roman. When Babylon was taken by Cyrus, and the united sovereignty of the Chaldeans and Assyrians was transferred to the Medes and Persians, according to the handwriting shown to Belshazzar on the wall; the first predicted transition took place. Again, when Alexander the Great subdued the mighty armies of Persia, about three hundred years before the christian era, and moved the seat of power from Asia to Europe—from the hundred and twenty-seven provinces extending from India to Ethiopia, (Esther i., 1) to the peninsula of Macedonia and Greece included between two arms of the Mediterranean sea—the second transition occurred. And then, when the successors of Alexander—the Ptolemies and Antiochuses, and others—fell before the conquering sword of the Romans: when the sovereignty that had centred in Greece moved still farther westward to the seven-hilled city of Rome, and the line of Cæsars began to embody in their own persons the supreme rule over the whole civilised world; the next great transition to the fourth predicted empire was developed—a transition, whose ramifications, however broken and disjointed, exist to this present hour over the extent of christendom, and shall exist till the last great change

\* The emblems by which the prophet Daniel describes these empires, seem to have been significantly connected with their history. In particular, the Assyrian emblem—a lion with eagle's wings (chapter vii., 4), has received remarkable illustration lately, by the researches of Mr. Layard, at Nineveh. The figure of an eagle-winged lion has been dug up from the buried ruins of two thousand three hundred years, and is now lodged in the British Museum, verifying the prophetic representation of Assyrian sovereignty and Assyrian idolatry. So also the Persian ram and Grecian goat are still found on ancient coins—(See chapter viii., 3, 5).

shall merge all earthly kingdoms in the heavenly dominion of him who is King of kings and Lord of lords. Now, it is to the fourth empire thus spoken of by Daniel the prophet, that the predictions of St. John have especial reference. The former dominions of Babylon, and Persia, and Greece, had passed away—at least they were all swallowed up in the general sovereignty of Rome.\* And the gospel having been preached within the bounds of that mighty empire; yea, having been brought to the very palace of the Cæsars, and meeting with no encouragement, but rather with rejection and opposition; our Lord himself being crucified, his apostles imprisoned and killed, and many a faithful witness for the truth consigned to torture and suffering, all under the sanction of the Roman powers; a voice from heaven at length proclaims the doom of that proud monarchy, declares the approaching overthrow of its state and polity, and announces on the authority of God that the ruin thereof should be great. Each successive opening of a seal in the seven-sealed book is a part of the fore-ordained process of bringing about the downfall of imperial Rome. But first that empire is presented in its state of palmy and victorious magnificence. So the *first seal* exhibits it. (Chapter vi., 2) “*I saw and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.*” A horse with a crowned rider was a common device on coins as an emblem of the Roman sovereignty (just as a helmeted female figure, armed with

\* It is observable that the name of Babylon descends from the first of these monarchies to the last, and marks out papal Rome at the period of its final destruction—(Chapter xiv., 8, xviii, 2, &c.)

a trident and shield, and resting on a lion, represents the British sovereignty): and the additional emblem of "the bow" points to the emperor Nerva, who was sprung from Crete, famous for its archery, and was the first foreigner that broke in on the Italian line of the twelve Cæsars and commenced a new race of emperors under whom the realm signally prospered. We have here, then, a clear exhibition of the triumphant progress of the arms and authority of Rome which went on from the days of Domitian until the latter end of the second century, during the reigns of Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the two Antonines. The date of this seal may be supposed to extend from the time of the prophetic vision, A.D. 97 to 180,\* a period when the empire seems to have reached its zenith of conquest and glory.

SECOND SEAL (verse 4).—" *There went out another horse that was red, and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth; and that they should kill one another, and there was given unto him a great sword.*" After the prosperous condition intimated in the previous seal, here comes the intimation of a reverse. War and bloodshed now enter the scene. Civil discord disturbs the tranquillity of the empire. The Prætorian prefects at Rome, and the imperial lieutenants to whom the "sword" of the executive government was com-

\* The reader will observe that the word translated "crown" in this seal, (στέφανος) denotes the peculiar badge of imperial power used by the emperors at the period referred to. It was a garland, or wreath of laurel worn round the head. Afterwards another kind of crown (διαδημα) was adopted by Diocletian (about A.D. 284), consisting of a circular plate or fillet studded with pearls. The heads of the dragon (in chapter xii.) are *diademed*, pointing out a time posterior to Diocletian.

mitted in the provinces, engage in a succession of murderous commotions. This state of things refers particularly to the reigns of the emperors from Pertinax to Decius, A.D. 193 to 249, during which, assassinations, dethronements, and ambitious struggles for power so miserably prevailed, that they are assigned by Gibbon the historian (unconsciously becoming the interpreter of prophecy), as the first cause of the decline and fall of the Roman empire.

THIRD SEAL (verse 5).—*“And when he had opened the third seal, I beheld, and lo! a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand; and I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.”* Here is another agency at work plunging the empire into confusion. The procurators, or provincial governors, whose office it was to preside over the collection of taxes and supply of provisions, and whose coins had “a pair of balances” stamped on them, as an emblem of the fairness with which they were bound to execute their duties, became notorious for extortion and oppression (compare Hosea xii., 7). Though orders were issued defining the items of taxation, and regulating the value of provisions, when purchased for public purposes, at a fair standard, and charging them not to defraud or injure in respect of “oil and wine;” yet these orders were too commonly disregarded, and the injustice of the fiscal administrations caused general discontent, and rendered the people ripe for revolt and rebellion. This was especially the case after the edict of Caracalla, which imposed on the provinces an intolerable weight of taxes, and which Gibbon

(again giving involuntary testimony to the truth of scripture) makes another most important cause of the empire's decline.

FOURTH SEAL (verse 8).—“*I looked and behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him: and power was given to them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.*” An era of terrible mortality, arising from a combination of God's four judgments, is here displayed (Ezekiel xiv., 21). Famine and pestilence, wild beasts, and the sword, avenge the Lord's cause on his enemies. Each judgment had its “fourth part,” its allotted share (see Jeremiah xv., 2) over the Roman earth, till “the ruined empire (in the words of Gibbon) seemed to approach the last fatal moment of its dissolution.” A pestilence raged at Rome, from A. D. 250 to 265, during which five thousand died daily, and in the provinces similar mortality prevailed, leading the historian to suspect that a full half of the human species perished: whence Cyprian took occasion to write his famous treatise “*De Mortalitate.*” The period referred to is during the reigns of Gallus, Volusius, Valerian, and Gallienus.

FIFTH SEAL (verse 9, 10).—“*I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long, O Lord God, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*” A scene of persecution and its attendant consequences is here presented to view. The prophet beheld a vision of the souls of the martyrs at rest, under the altar of the Temple of God in heaven,

like victims that had been sacrificed, crying out for vengeance on their persecutors, and intimating that the judgments hanging over the Roman people, were coming as a just retribution from the Almighty on account of his servants' blood that was shed. The persecution chiefly referred to is that which lasted ten years, from A.D. 303 to 313, in the reign of Diocletian, called the era of martyrs. During that most lamentable period, thousands of christians were cruelly put to death for their religion: and Tertullian's complaint, written on a previous occasion, was now more sadly verified, that on every pretext, no matter how slight, if any adversity or calamity occurred to the state, the unoffending christians were blamed as the cause of it, and were punished. "Si Nilus non ascendit in arva, si Tiberis ascendit ad mœnia, si fames, si pestis, si strages, tunc—christianos ad leones." "If the Nile does not ascend into the fields, if the Tiber overflows to the walls, if there be famine or pestilence or war, then—the christians to the lions." No wonder that wrath from heaven followed. It is intimated, however, in the eleventh verse, that though present judgments should overtake the persecutors, yet the great final retribution was not to take place till other scenes of persecution and trial should occur, to fill up the measure of the world's wickedness and of the martyrs' praise.

SIXTH SEAL (verses 12, 17).—"I beheld, and lo! there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind; and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island

*were moved out of their places.*" Under this striking description is shadowed forth the great revolution in the reigns of the emperor Constantine and his successors, A.D. 323 to 395, which overthrew the old pagan religion in the Roman world, and changed the empire from its heathen state, to bear henceforth the christian name. We need not wonder that such a revolution, so mighty in its results, and so extensive in its influences, should be spoken of in language the most exalted and sublime. It is the custom of scripture to foretell the changes of empires by emblems taken from the convulsion of the elements of nature, and the upturning, as it were, of the foundations of the earth (compare Isaiah ii., 19, xiii., 13, xxxiv., 4; Joel ii., 30, 31, iii., 16; Ezekiel xxxii., 7, 8; Hosea x., 8; Hag. ii., 6, 21; Luke xxiii., 30). And Gibbon, adopting unawares almost the identical language of prophecy, in alluding to this very revolution, says, "the ruin of the pagan religion is described as a dreadful and amazing prodigy, which covered the earth with darkness, and restored the ancient dominion of chaos and of night." Great, indeed, must have been the convulsion, when the entire body of heathen magistrates, priests, augurs, and devotees of idol-worship, many of whom by this craft had their wealth, fell at once from their political and religious eminence, not of their own accord, but shaken like untimely figs in a storm, by the strong arm of Constantine, and afterwards of Theodosius the Great; and were compelled to give up their posts of honour and influence, and to hide themselves henceforth in remote villages (whence the name "*pagani*" or "*villagers*," as applied to heathen idolaters, had its origin), imagining in their consternation that the crisis which had so

suddenly overwhelmed the established order of things in the Roman world could be nothing less than the end of the world itself. Such surprise took possession of their minds when they beheld the despised banner of the cross exalted over the ruins of heathenism, as to lead them to "*say to the mountains and rocks fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb*"—from the anger of the God whom the christians worship—"for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

SEVENTH SEAL (chapter vii).—A new state of things arose in the church and in the world, when the empire, having renounced heathenism, became professedly christian. At this time, a period of repose was granted to the long-afflicted and persecuted followers of Christ; and medals still existing of the reign of Constantine bear the inscription "*beata tranquillitas,*" "*blessed tranquillity,*" to denote those halcyon days which are fitly represented (in verse 1) by a calm among trees, and a restraining of all tempests by land and sea. Soon were the winds again to blow. Soon were the storms of Gothic invasion from without, and of apostacy and false doctrine from within, to bring agitation and trouble anew; but in the meanwhile, during a brief season of comparative prosperity and rest, a sealing angel goes forth from God to put a mark on his own faithful people, and establish a church within a church—an Israel indeed, as contrasted with an Israel only in profession—a true christian company as compared with the mixed multitude of nominal adherents—an elect remnant, in short, against whom neither external persecution nor internal corruption should be able to prevail. Such is the meaning of the one hundred and forty-



four thousand sealed ones—a number arising from multiplying twelve by twelve, in allusion to the patriarchs and apostles, and the product by one thousand, to denote the large multitude of true believers even in the worst of times. The tribes of Israel are fitly taken to represent the company of christian people : because the holy seed, the church, whether in the old or new dispensation, is one. And to show us that only the pure spiritual worshippers of God are intended, no mention is made of the tribes of Dan or Ephraim which were noted for idolatry (see Judges xviii., 3; Hosea iv., 17), whilst Levi is enumerated amongst the rest, to teach us that, in the christian covenant, there are no separate privileges attached to any order of sacrificing priests; all believers alike being made kings and priests unto God. This sealing vision intimates that, in the times now coming on, after the change of religion under Constantine, there would be a confusion between the church and the world, which was likely to lead to hypocrisy and false profession. Many would be satisfied with the name of christian, and would think it enough to conform to outward rites and ceremonies, whilst they were strangers to true faith and true holiness. But it must be shown that the “ foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” And the genuine christians, the sealed ones, are therefore to be marked as “ a peculiar people,” quite distinct from the crowds who soon began to confound the form with the substance—to confound, for instance, baptism with regeneration—the receiving of the bread and wine in the Lord’s supper with the receiving of Christ—absolution from a priest with absolution from God—or

any of the mere outward parts of religion, which man can confer, with the inward and spiritual graces which only the Holy Ghost can bestow. The great truth was now to be insisted on, that not mere profession or external observances, or attendance on ecclesiastical rites can avail to constitute a christian; but "faith which worketh by love," which "purifies the heart" and "overcomes the world;" and that as many as walk according to this rule, they, and they only, are blessed in time and happy in eternity. The apostle was permitted to behold the glorious company of the redeemed in heaven, and to announce for certain, in opposition to all false doctrine, the way in which they obtain admission there. Not by human merit, nor by sacramental or priestly ordinances, but by "*the blood of the Lamb.*" "Therefore are they before the throne, and serve him day and night in his temple. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat—for the Lamb which is in midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

(Chapter viii., 1)—"*And when he had opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour.*" This solemn pause seems to correspond with the brief period of repose already referred to in chapter vii., 1—and fitly serves to usher in the momentous events following. After the sealing of a faithful band of witnesses to protest against the incoming flood of error—Christ, the angel of the covenant, is represented standing at the altar of incense, as the only mediator between God and man, in just indignation for his inalienable prerogative now beginning to be invaded by the invocation of the virgin

and saints and other mediators, ready to pour forth wrath and destruction on the world by the blasts of the seven trumpets which were preparing to sound. And we are to observe that all these seven trumpets are included in the seventh seal. Just as in the destruction of Jericho of old, the seventh and last day's work included the compassing of the city seven times with blowing of trumpets; so in the destruction of the great city, whose doom the apocalypse reveals, the opening of the last seal includes the blasts of seven trumpets which were to go on sounding till the announcement should be made of Babylon's total fall, and of the triumph of the kingdom of our Lord.

We shall proceed to consider these trumpets in their order, merely premising that the very nature of their blast implies "the sounding an alarm" (see Num. x., 5; Joel ii., 1) of wrath from heaven to an apostate and guilty world.

#### THE VISION OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS.

FIRST TRUMPET (chapter viii., 7)—"*The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood; and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.*" The Roman world, or christendom, as we may call it, since its nominal profession of christianity, is still the theatre of the apocalyptic events; and in order that we may understand the expression "third part," used in the chapter before us, we are to bear in mind, that, in and after the time of Constantine, there was a threefold division of the empire. Constantinople, in the east, having been built as a rival to Rome in the west, a distinction between the eastern and western provinces attached to each capital necessarily

arose ; and a third division, consisting of what was called the Illyrian Præfecture, lay between them. The expression, therefore, of the "third part," in reference to the state of things existing at the time of the trumpets' beginning to sound, is strictly correct, and fixes our attention on the Roman empire after the separation between the eastern and western and Illyrian parts took place, under Constantine, Licinius, and Maximin, A. D. 311. In the emblem of "hail and fire mingled with blood," we find a clear announcement of the bursting forth of the Goths under Alaric, like a tempest from the north, on the fair plains of Italy, accompanied by awful storms of literal hail which occurred at the time, as if to enforce the apocalyptic symbol.\* This was in the year A. D. 395, when the strong arm of Theodosius, who had long kept the barbarians in check, was removed by death. "The dark cloud (says Gibbon) which was collected along the coasts of the Baltic, burst in thunder upon the banks of the upper Danube. Alaric felt a preternatural impulse compelling his march to Rome." The imperial city was burnt with fire, and the streets filled with dead bodies, whilst the country parts were so ravaged that the trees and grass were destroyed ; and Joel's language, used on another occasion, became applicable,

\* It is remarkable that in the prophecies of the Apocalypse there is often a mingling of the *literal* with the *emblematic* ; as if the symbols had connection with some real events in the history of the places and times. Thus, the "hail storms" here, the "sea" and "star" in the next, and the "rivers and fountains" in the third trumpet : also, the "locusts" in the fifth, and "fire and brimstone" in the sixth : and again, the "sea" and "rivers" in the second and third vials—though they seem to demand an emblematic interpretation, are capable of literal application to natural circumstances developed in the fulfilment,

"the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness, and nothing shall escape them."

SECOND TRUMPET (verse 8, 9)—"*And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.*"

This seems clearly to point to the invasion of Genseric, king of the Vandals, who, occupying the Mediterranean with his ships, subdued all the principal ports in Africa and Italy, spreading havoc and ruin wherever his fleet sailed. Gibbon still is our expositor of prophecy (albeit he meant not so), and the remarkable language which he uses to describe Genseric's terrible assaults is fully illustrative of the symbols before us. "Rome was hurled from its base, and plunged like a huge burning mountain into a sea of wars and tumults." The volcanic fires which were consuming the once proud mistress of the world by civil commotions from within, meeting with the desolating tide of Vandalic invasion from without, overwhelmed unhappy Rome in a tumultuous whirlpool of destruction. Just as it was threatened to Babylon of old (Jeremiah li., 25), "behold I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyeth all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and make thee a burnt mountain"—so was it here. This trumpet's blast, calling Genseric and the Vandals for its overthrow, left the empire, particularly in its maritime provinces, a complete wreck—like a burnt mountain or volcano when the eruption is over, exhibiting nothing but desolation on every side.

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THIRD TRUMPET (verse 10, 11)—“*And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from the heaven, burning as it were a lump, and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*” The emblem of a blazing star falling from the skies to the earth, and carrying such injurious effects along with it, must denote some mighty warrior sent to terrify mankind, and leaving traces of his course wherever he goes, in lamentation, and mourning, and woe. Such a man was Attila, king of the Huns. History in describing him borrows the very idea of St. John, calls him “a baleful meteor,” and compares him to a blazing comet which at that time wonderfully appeared in the sky. His lurid path was marked with calamities before unheard of. When he invaded Italy, “from the Alps to the Apennines (says Sigonius) all was flight, depopulation, slaughter, slavery, and despair.” The common name by which he was known was, “the scourge of God.” He fell like wormwood on the symbolic rivers and fountains—the authorities and rulers of Europe, and he passed also along the literal rivers, the Danube and the Rhine, and reddened them with blood. He poisoned, in fact, all the sources of peace and order, and embittered life by the desolating plagues which he carried in his train. So that what formerly befell the Jews (Jeremiah viii., 15), “I will feed them with wormwood, and give them waters of gall to drink,” was now fearfully exemplified amongst the nations of the west by Attila, whilst he went on burning cities, massacring the inhabitants, and laying countries waste, till his career was arrested by sudden death, and the glare of the meteor was extinguished in darkness.

FOURTH TRUMPET (verse 12).—*“And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.”* Here is a total eclipse of the imperial dignity in the west, or “third part,” comprising throughout these four first trumpets, the division of the ancient world which had Rome for its capital. Having long struggled with the Gothic invasions, and inward dissensions, that ill-fated city at length sank to ruin. The last fatal blow was inflicted by Odoacer and the Heruli A. D. 476. Henceforth the western line of the Cæsars ceases. There is no longer an emperor at Rome. Not only is the “sun,” the highest monarchical office, smitten; but the “moon and stars,” the senate and other powers of the state, are crushed by the victorious barbarians, and soon finally extinguished. And, if henceforth prophecy deals with Rome, it deals with it not as the seat of an emperor, or as the throne of the Cæsars—but under a new aspect, of which we shall have much to say hereafter, as the seat of a spiritual power, swaying a different sceptre, and exercising a mysterious influence greater than ever Cæsar knew, over the ten kingdoms which arose from the disruption of the empire, and the extinction of the old monarchy of the west.

FIFTH TRUMPET (chapter ix., 1—11).—Previous to the sounding of this trumpet an announcement is made which shows that peculiarly calamitous judgments are included in the voices of the three angels which are yet to sound, “*woe, woe, woe.*” The three last trumpets are therefore called emphatically woe

trumpets, as being fraught with excessive misery to the inhabitants of the earth. The one which we are now to consider presents a star falling from heaven and opening the bottomless pit, "*and there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, and unto them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power.*" There is no difficulty in understanding this of Mahomet and the Saracens; and wonderful indeed is the accuracy, even extending to the minutiae of dress and appearance, with which the rise of that formidable power in the east (for to the east we are now to turn), and the results that followed are described. The emblem that meets us in the last chapter, respecting Attila, is used again here, "a falling star." Mahomet was by birth a ruler, and heir to the principality of Mecca. He belonged to the tribe of Korreish and family of Hashan, one of the most illustrious in Arabia. But having lost his patrimony in his childhood, his fanatical and ambitious mind projected a new and supernatural leadership. He set up for an inspired prophet; and, then it was, being joined by the deluded people in crowds, and making his watchword the sword, that he fell like a meteor on the earth, a messenger of terrible vengeance on the nations with whom the Lord had a controversy. He announced that his mission was to punish idolatry; and the ravages of his armies extended over all the lands which were defiled with image-worship and the invocation of false mediators. His followers are compared to "locusts," not only because of their numbers and their destructive powers, but because they came from Arabia, the land where such noxious creatures abound (see Judges vi., 5; Deut. viii., 15). The duration of their dominant progress is stated—they were to torment men



"five months;" that is (counting each day for a year, according to the prophetic method)\* *for one hundred and fifty years.* And most remarkable it is, that the Saracens propagated their false system by conquest from A.D. 612, when Mahomet first publicly announced his pretended mission, to A.D. 762, in which year they built Bagdad, became a settled people, and ceased to extend their victories. While their career lasted, great were the torments which they inflicted on mankind. "*In those days shall men seek death and shall not find it, and shall desire to die and death shall flee from them.*" Existence was rendered a burden wherever their power prevailed. When they invaded a country, they did not indeed, like the Goths, destroy the trees and crops, but they took possession as tyrannical masters, and treated the inhabitants as slaves. Nor yet was their commission to "*kill*" men, or extinguish nations and annihilate dynasties, like the Turks in the next woe (verse 15), but to torment and degrade by the propagating of their false and sensual creed. This was the "*sting*" which they carried in their tails and left behind them; this was the "*hurt*," which damaged not only the temporal but the spiritual interests of the world. "Ye christian dogs, ye know your option—the Koran, the tribute, or the sword," was Calid's address to the Romans before the battle of Aiznadin. Inspired with such a spirit, their king might well be called "*Apollyon*," the destroyer (compare Daniel viii, 23, 24); and while he claimed to hold what he called the key of God, the scripture calls it more truly "the key of the bottomless pit."

\* The reasons for adopting this year-day numeration are given in note on chapter xi., 3, page 37.

SIXTH TRUMPET (verse 12)—“ *One woe is past ; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose the four angels that are in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.*” We have already remarked that the power of the Saracens may be said to have declined from the time of their settlement in Bagdad. In the year A. D. 934, the Abassydean caliph of that city having been deposed from his *secular* authority by the Persian Moslem dynasty of the Bowides, and the Moors in Spain (the western Saracens) having been conquered by the Spanish christians, a check was given to the Saracenic influence and arms from which they never recovered. But soon afterwards another power arose, more destructive than ever the Saracens had been, and destined to hold dominion for a much longer period. The TURKS were originally a shepherd tribe in Khorassan (the ancient Parthia), who, having revolted against the sultan of Ghizni, became independent, and elected Togrul Bey for their king. Having been invited to Bagdad to the assistance of the caliph Emir, they soon supplanted the Bowide dynasty, and Togrul being invested by the caliph, in A. D. 1057, as temporal vicegerent over the Moslem world—the power thus passed from the Saracens to the Turks, and the *second woe* began. Togrul’s dominions were divided into four sultanies ; and the Seljukian dynasty, to which he belonged, afterwards merged into the Scythian Othman, or Ottoman, in which form it lingers out a feeble

existence up to this present hour. But, though feeble now, it was once a dynasty which shook the world, and buried under its desolating sway all that existed of civilisation and learning and christianity in the fair regions of the east. The "*four angels*" that were loosed to bring this plague on the world seem to be the same that are mentioned in chapter vii., 2; and it is the same voice from the golden altar which proclaims it, as a punishment on the despisers of Christ's sole mediatorship and intercession. As long as the repose lasted consequent on the cessation of the Saracen's ravages by their settlement in Bagdad, these angels were "bound." But when the time arrived for introducing the second woe, they were "loosed," and sent forth from the banks of the Euphrates, bringing the Turkish plague upon the world. "*They were prepared for (or, at the end of, εἰς) an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.*" And here, again, we are constrained to admire the wonderful accuracy with which prophecy unfolds the most minute secrets of futurity. We have seen that the Turks were established in Bagdad in 1057, and Gibbon informs us, that almost immediately, they entered on a war of extermination against Greek christendom. Togrul himself dying, the command devolved on his nephew and successor, Alp Arslan, who "passed the Euphrates," as the historian describes it, A. D. 1063, "at the head of the Turkish cavalry; and the loss of the kingdom of Armenia was the news of a day." Now counting from the year when we may suppose this conquering host began to be organised (1062), to the well known date when the eastern division of the Roman empire—"the third part of men"—was signally overwhelmed and

destroyed by the capture of Constantinople in 1453, we have the fore-ordained interval, according to the usual prophetic numeration, exactly made up, viz. :—

1 year, or 12 prophetic months of 30 days = 360 years.

1 month ... .. = 30 "

1 day ... .. = 1 "

1 hour (24th part of a day) ... .. = 0 15 days.

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391 years 15 days\*

So that at the precise appointed time, at the end of the destined "year, and month, and day, and hour," the Turkish hosts accomplished their work. Just as the *western* "third part" of the Roman world had been punished under the *four first* trumpets; so is the *eastern* under the *fifth and sixth*. And both judgments took place on a guilty people who had provoked the divine displeasure by corrupting the truth of the gospel. For this, western christendom was smitten with the swords of the Goths and Vandals; and for this, eastern christendom was smitten by the swords of the Saracens and Turks. And the whole of the imperial power which originally belonged to Rome was brought to an end, in the defeat of Constantine Palæologus (the last emperor), and the taking of Constantinople, on the 29th of May, 1453. Great indeed was the awfulness of the event, and

\* If we take the "year" for our common solar one of 365½ days, instead of the prophetic one of 360, as defined in chapter xi., 2, 3 (which many commentators consider to be intimated in the Greek word used in verse 15), *ενιαυτος*, a revolution, not *καιρος*, a time, as in chapter xii., 14), the interval would be 396 years and some months in which case the reckoning should commence five years sooner—namely, at the equally remarkable era of 1057. In either calculation the accuracy is *wonderful*.

terrible the example of God's righteous indignation, when the crescent of Mahomet was erected over the downfall of the cross in the fairest and most interesting countries of the globe ; and when the delusions of Islamism were allowed to supersede the benign doctrines of the Bible, to the ruin of the temporal and eternal welfare of the teeming multitudes who, from that time to the present, have inhabited those beautiful but blighted lands. No wonder that an interest was excited at the siege of Constantinople, such as was, perhaps, never excited by any event before or since. Christianity and Mahommedanism seemed to be disputing the possession of the earth. But it was not the christianity of scripture. It was a perverted gospel produced by "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." God would not own it as his, nor interfere for its preservation ; yea, rather he frowned upon it in displeasure, and suffered the infidel to prevail. St. John describes minutely the fatal conflict. Of the countless thousands (myriads of myriads) of the Turkish cavalry, he says, "*I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone : and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.*" The brilliant colours of their clothing, and the lion-like fierceness of the animals and their riders, are combined with a striking description of the use of gunpowder, discovered at this time, and first extensively employed by the Turks in this war. "Canst thou find me a cannon," said the sultan Mahomet to the founder, "that can batter down the wall of Constantinople?" The foundry was set to work, and the cannon formed ; one of the guns being so large as to require seventy yoke of oxen

and two hundred men to move it along. To the deadly fire of this artillery, Gibbon attributes the capture of the city and destruction of the empire, in accordance with the sure word of prophecy, "*by these three* (fire, smoke, and brimstone) *was the third part of men killed.*" It is added, "*for their power,*" or authority, "*is in their mouth and in their tails.*" A most remarkable feature of the Turkish strength is here alluded to; namely, the stern discipline exercised by their pashas, or rulers, who were distinguished by *tails* of horsehair (as we read of a pasha with one, two, or three tails according to his dignity); "*for their tails are like unto serpents and have heads,*" combining the craft and policy for which Mahommedanism is always notorious, with the despotic pre-eminence which the headship or pashalic confers—" *and with these they do hurt,*" or literally, *commit injustice*, as the testimony of history, ancient and modern, in connection with the oppressive tyranny of the Turkish pashas, abundantly proves. How amazing, then, the accuracy and exactness of this prophecy; and how incontestible the evidences of its fulfilment! But, notwithstanding such a manifest judgment of God as is here revealed against the corrupters of his gospel, the world has never learned to lay the lesson to heart. "*The rest of men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils* (i.e., demons, or false mediators), *and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which neither can see nor hear nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts.*"

THE LITTLE BOOK.—ERA OF THE REFORMATION (chapter x. xi. to 13).—The close of the preceding chapter left the christian world (so-called) in a state of lamentable apostacy. In the east, the profession of true religion was almost extinct through the desolating tyranny of the Turkish power, which now, according to Daniel's prediction (Dan. viii., 9) "waxed exceeding great towards the south, and towards the east, and towards the pleasant land;" which "cast down" the "stars," or ministers of christianity, "to the ground, and stamped upon them;" and which trod under foot also the "sanctuary," where "the daily sacrifice" of christian worship and praise was superseded by the imposture of Islamism; and the cry of the Muezzin, inviting to the Mahommedan mosque, was heard instead of the church-going bell, calling to the gospel house of prayer. In the west, though the name of christianity prevailed, yet the life and spirit of it were almost gone. A system of antichristian error had taken the place of the pure and simple religion of Jesus: the scriptures were concealed from the people, and tradition, the falsest of guides, had led its unhappy followers into the gross darkness of superstition and idolatry. Under such circumstances, whilst the sixteenth century of the christian era seemed to be ushered in amidst the most gloomy forebodings, a new and glorious vision appeared to the apostle's eye. "*I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth.*" This angel can be none other than the

Lord Jesus—the angel of the covenant (Mal. iii., 1), interfering for the succour of his cause and truth in their lowest ebb, and producing THE REFORMATION. He appears encircled with those attributes of divine majesty which no creature can claim, and thus presents himself as THE CHRIST, at the very time when Antichrist,\* now come to full maturity, was most blasphemously parodying at Rome (in the person of Leo X) his inalienable prerogatives. “The little book,” which he holds in his hand, is THE BIBLE—that volume which, though small in compass, and rendered the more portable by the invention of printing (at this time providentially discovered), contains all truth that is necessary for man’s comfort in time, and salvation in eternity—that volume which, received into the heart, “is sweeter than honey to the taste” (Ps. xix., 10, and cxix., 103), even though its effects may be to “make the belly bitter” by inward penitential sorrow, as well as by outward persecutions. The book was now *open*—no longer concealed within the dark recesses of monasteries—no longer unknown as to its very existence to any but the learned and wealthy—but brought to light by Luther from the recesses of the library at Erfurt, and diffused by the printing-press throughout the civilised world. This was the grand instrument of imparting life from the dead to the nations sunk in ignorance and error; and the Lord’s voice in sending it forth, was “as when a lion roareth,” causing

\* The word Antichrist (occurring in 1st John ii., 18) cannot mean simply a *person opposed to Christ*—but a *vice-Christ*; one pretending to be *instead* of the Saviour, or setting himself up as his *vicar* and *representative*. Antichrist cannot, therefore, be an *open infidel*. The leaven was beginning to work in the apostle’s days (2nd Thes. ii., 7), but the full development was reserved for the papacy when established at Rome.



dismay to the abettors of darkness, and conveying strong consolation to all who loved the gospel. But no sooner was the word of God thus published, than "*seven thunders uttered their voices*" in opposition to it. The thunders of papal bulls, issuing from the seven hills of Rome, tried to put down the reading and circulation of the scriptures, but in vain. St. John was instructed to "*seal the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not*"—intimating that these efforts for preventing the spread of truth would be of no avail, and that whilst an antichristian power, sitting as it were in the temple of God, issued its decrees against the Bible, the true head of the church from heaven condemned such decrees as impious; and commanded his servants (at first perhaps hesitating, like Luther for a time, whether to obey the pope or not) neither to write nor regard them. During the commotions consequent on this new struggle between light and darkness, there was an expectation amongst many thoughtful people that the end of the world was come; but the angel standing upon the sea and upon the earth (compare Daniel xii., 7) lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore "*that the time should not be yet;\** but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, the mystery of God should be finished." The consummation was not to arrive till the last of the seven trumpets should sound, whereas the sixth, or Turkish woe, was still going on, and should continue for many years to come. In the meanwhile, the prophet was directed to "*prophesy again before many peoples and nations and tongues and kings*"—this word "again" implying that the era of the Refor-

\* Such seems to be the meaning of the expression "*ὅτι ὁ χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἐτι.*"

mation, now commencing, was to be a second revival or new birth of Christianity on earth; and the word "prophecy," implying that a preached gospel was now to be the glory of the church, as opposed to a service in an unknown tongue, and the muttering by a priest of a Latin mass.

(Chapter xi., 1)—"*And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*" An allusion is here made to the typical import of the temple at Jerusalem, the inner part of which symbolised the true worshippers of God, and the outer part, or court of the Gentiles, those nominal professors who corrupted the truth by idolatry and falsehood. And when St. John was commanded to measure the one with a "rod," or staff of authority (see Numb. xvii., 2; 1st Cor. iv., 21), and leave out the other—it denoted the Lord's intention of having the reformed churches now regularly constituted as his witnesses on earth, in contrast to the papal church which was cast out to reprobacy as a synagogue of Satan. These witnesses, it is true, had been in existence long before, uttering their loud protest, and patiently suffering for the truth's sake. Since ever the corruptions which St. Paul and Peter had given warning of (see Acts xx., 29; 1st Tim. iv., 1; 2nd Pet. ii., 1) had come to maturity—as early they did, to the defilement of the gospel vineyard—there were not wanting some at least to maintain the honour of Christ and uphold his cause: and bands of faithful protestors against abounding error can be traced down

through all the darkness of the middle ages, till they merged into the duly organised protestant churches of the reformation. The rise of antichrist's tyranny, is the date of the witnesses' protest; and thus we read in the third verse, which goes back to their origin, "*I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy twelve hundred and sixty days clothed in sackcloth; these are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.*" In the worst of times there have been churches (for wherever two or three are met together in Christ's name, there is a church) preserving the true worship of God, not perhaps in splendid cathedrals or rich ecclesiastical edifices, but in some upper chamber, or on the mountain's side, or in dens and caves of the earth; and these, wherever found, were the Lord's candlesticks, owned by him, though often disowned and unchurched by men. The number "two" is probably used to denote sufficiency, for under the law "the testimony of two men is true" (see Deut. xix., 15; John viii., 17); and probably also, to denote by this plural emblem, that the company of christian people was not to be confined under one uniform ecclesiastical polity (like the Jewish people who were symbolised by *one* candlestick, Zech. iv., 2), but composed of distinct communities rising in different places and times, diversified in form though agreeing in essentials. Such communities of true christian witnesses have never been wanting. The Paulicians in the east, who can be traced down from A.D. 653, and the christians of Piedmont, Switzerland, and France in the west, with others in various countries, including our own, by whatever name they have been called, whether Waldenses, or Albigenes, or Hussites, or Lollards, or whatever else, have fulfilled

this prediction of "prophesying," or preaching and testifying the gospel, for their appointed time, "clothed in sackcloth." That appointed time is specified as "twelve hundred and sixty days," in verse 3, clearly cotemporaneous, or identical with, the "forty-two months" of verse 2. The same period also is mentioned in chapter xii., 6, and xiii., 5, and again in xii., 14. Taking it in reference to the true church (which is of the light and the day) there seems to be a reason why it should be specified as twelve hundred and sixty *days*. Taking it in reference to the apostacy (which is of the night and darkness) there seems a reason for calling it forty-two *moons* or *months*. And taking it in reference to the kings of the earth, there seems a reason for counting it as three and-a-half *times*, or *years*, marked by revolutions of the earth. In all its aspects, however, it points to the one great prophetic duration of twelve hundred and sixty years, reckoning as usual a day for a year\* from the

\* This principle of prophetic interpretation appears to be plainly authorised and established in Ezek. iv., 5, 6. Every candid student of prophecy must surely admit that the word "day," being of indeterminate application, and not confined to the limit of twenty-four hours, but frequently used to express much longer periods (see Zech. xiv., 6, 8; Psalm xciv., 8; 2nd Pet. iii., 8, &c.) is more likely in these emblematic visions to denote a lengthened duration, than a mere diurnal change from night to darkness—especially when we take into consideration the analogy that the emblems bear to the real events which they foreshow. Thus, when the age of any living thing, such as a beast or a woman, is used as the symbol for expressing the duration of an empire, it is natural to conclude that the "days" in the symbolic history of the former should figure out some greater spaces of time in the real history of the latter. And this likelihood amounts almost to certainty, when we find God himself appointing to the prophet Ezekiel the standard scale of a day for a year. This scale, moreover, being found to correspond (like a well fitted key suited to the wards of a lock) to the various historical eras which time unfolds as the events come to pass, no

first establishment of the reign of darkness till its final close, during which the churches of the saints should suffer persecution. There seems a general agreement among sound commentators that the commencement of the pope's domination must be dated from the time in which the saints were "given into his hand" by some authoritative edicts; and we find that such edicts were made on two remarkable occasions—first, by the emperor Justinian, A. D. 529, and secondly, by the emperor Phocas in A. D. 606. In these decrees, the eastern emperors (having obtained authority once more in Italy, on the overthrow of the Ostrogoths), proclaimed the pope of Rome to be universal bishop and head of the catholic world—and hence his arrogant and successful assertion of supremacy. The egg of papal tyranny was indeed laid and hatched before, but the full-fledged bird did not take wing till the impe-

doubt can remain of the correctness of the principle, and of the propriety of the system of interpretation which depends upon it.

We may see a reason for the veil that was thrown over the prophetic announcement of dates, inasmuch as the church was thereby kept always in a waiting posture, looking for the Lord's coming, even from the earliest ages. The same reason also accounts for the "year day" interpretation being in a great degree hidden from former generations until the era of fulfilment was drawing near; at the same time it must be remembered that Augustine and others did consider the twelve hundred and sixty days of antichrist as involving a much more extended period than natural days; and, indeed, from Cyprian, in the third century, to the Waldenses in the thirteenth, many were found to understand the short duration in the symbol as implying a larger one in the fulfilment.

To get rid of the plain application of the prophecies, thus interpreted, to popery, the *Præterist* scheme, confining the revelation to events *previous* to the destruction of Jerusalem, was suggested by the *Jesuit Alcasir*: and the *Futurist*, referring it to a literal three and-a-half years reign of antichrist at the end of the world, by the *Jesuit Ribera*. It is sad to see protestants falling into the snare of the enemy and adopting such views!

rial edicts gave him power to enforce it on the world. Now, if we adopt the first of these dates, the twelve hundred and sixty years would expire about the time when the French revolution in 1789 began to break the power of popery, and to put a stop to the public persecution of the protestant churches on the continent. If we adopt the second, it will bring us to the year 1866. It is probable that both dates may be admissible, as in the case of the seventy year's captivity foretold by Jeremiah, to which two commencing and ending periods may properly be assigned; the one referring to the initial, the other to the concluding crisis of the event predicted. What is most remarkable in the consideration of such an interval, say of seventy-five years, is the fact that Daniel suggests it in the distinction which he makes (Dan. xii., 12) between the "twelve hundred and sixty" and "thirteen hundred and thirty-five" year-days marking the time of "the end." One thing seems certain, that popery now is in the last stage of its existence, and that the spiritual despotism which has so long enslaved the world will soon meet its overthrow. Nor do the present increasing pretensions and apparent success of the system weaken the prophetic threatenings; for it is when Babylon says "I sit as a queen and shall know no sorrow" (chapter xviii., 7) that she is nearest to her awful downfall.

The "two witnesses," or protesting churches, are said to "*have power to smite the earth with plagues as often as they will;*" intimating that the cries of God's persecuted people enter into his ears, and call forth his vengeance against the persecutors. "*And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit sho"*

*make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."* This death of the witnesses and their resurrection afterwards must be understood *figuratively* (as the prophecy itself declares in verse 8), and refer to the apparent extinction on the one hand, and revival on the other, of their doctrines, which was to occur at a certain period of their career. Symbolic churches, represented by olive trees and candlesticks, can only be killed and raised again in the depression and exaltation of the *principles* by which they are animated; and the question is, did anything answering to this description take place in the history of the witnesses? Assuredly there did—in a manner the most signal and striking. When they were finishing their testimony—not closing it with respect to time, but *completing* it with respect to *fulness* and *sufficiency*—or, in other words, when they had reached a point in their history, which filled up the measure of their doctrinal protest against prevailing corruptions—the papal power made a violent effort to crush them, and succeeded. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, when it is well known that the impious dogmas of the great apostacy had come to their full, and the testimony of the sorrowing witnesses clothed in sackcloth had come to their full also—when almost every possible error had sprung up within what was termed the catholic church, and had called forth an indignant remonstrance from the few who knew the truth as it is in Jesus—even then it was that the prediction of the verses before us was fulfilled. The beast (of whom we shall have more to

say hereafter) "made war" with the witnesses and "killed," or extinguished them. By the dungeons and racks of the inquisition, by the burning of martyrs, by the persecution of all who were suspected of heresy, the emissaries of Rome had succeeded in rendering the world to all appearance subject to the papal chair. Like the Assyrian of old (Isaiah x., 13, 14) the pope could boast "I have removed the bounds of the people, and have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man; and there was none that moved the wing or opened the mouth or peeped." Wickliffe and his followers seemed to have been silenced for ever in the grave. Huss and Jerome of Prague had sealed their testimony with their blood. The Bohemian brethren, sending round to enquire whether any could be found to join them in worshipping God in spirit and in truth, found their search vain. The whole of the nations seemed to lie submissive at the feet of antichrist; and when the fifth Lateran council was assembled in A.D. 1514, and no dissentient ventured to appear and answer its summons, the triumphant exclamation of the papal orator was, in language never used before or since "Jam nemo reclamaf, nullus obsistit"—"no one now utters a voice against the papal see, no one opposes it." The council therefore separated, as historians inform us, with mutual congratulations on the peace and unity of the church. This was "THE DEATH" of the witnesses. But mark what follows. It was on the 5th of May, 1514, that the above-mentioned Lateran council indulged in such proud boastings. Trace on the prophetic history for three and-a-half days—a day for a year. The "dead bodies" of the witnesses, lie, as it were, exposed to scorn, unburied and unhonoured in the place where the



council sat, in the "main street," or capital of christendom—of that "great city" which might well be called Sodom for its filthiness, and Egypt for its idolatry—where, in every chapel, and at every celebration of mass, the Lord of life was "crucified" afresh and put to open shame. But on the 17th of October, 1517, just at the expiration of the appointed three and-a-half years, a change occurs. There is posted at the doors of the cathedral of Wittenberg a paper around which crowds are gazing in astonishment. Luther, a monk, who had met with a Bible in the monastery at Erfurt, and read it, has published his famous Theses, asserting the authority of scripture in opposition to human tradition, and striking a deadly blow at popish error, by proclaiming the full atonement and exclusive mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, in opposition to the penances, and indulgences, and priestly absolutions of Rome. It was like the day-spring from on high visiting the earth after a long night of darkness and sorrow. *The persecuted witnesses revive.* The doctrines of evangelical religion, which seemed to be crushed, start forth again to life. The abettors of error, who rejoiced and made merry at the putting down of those faithful protests which tormented them, are now utterly confounded. "*The spirit of life from God*" animates a noble company of reformers, who stand forward with boldness to embrace and maintain the truth, "*an exceeding great army.*" Not only do multitudes of the common people side with Luther and his colleagues, but princes take up their cause and give them patronage and protection. "*They ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them*"—that is, they were raised to power in the political firmament, in the sight of all men, and to the dismay

of their adversaries, when, by the treaty of Passau in 1552, protestantism became entitled in Germany not merely to toleration, but to influence and authority. "*And the same hour was there a great earthquake.*" As the transition from paganism to christianity was represented by an earthquake in the language of the sixth seal, so here the transition from popery to evangelical truth is represented by an earthquake also. For more than a hundred years the nations were convulsed by the reformation struggles; though all, alas! did not come forth from the conflict equally purified. Several were partially reformed; but only *one* of the ten kingdoms into which western christendom was divided was *permanently* and *thoroughly* severed from all connection with Romanism; and that is our own favoured Britain, referred to in the prophecy when it is said "*the tenth part of the city fell.*" This "fall," or revolt, begun in the reigns of Henry, and Edward, and Elizabeth, was completed at the revolution of 1688—God grant that it may be finally and for ever! We are also told that "*in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand;*" or as it is literally translated "names of men seven chiliads," specifying the exact numerical divisions (compare Micah vi., 2) of a most important commonwealth, the seven united Dutch provinces, which at this period also, by separating from Spain, asserted their liberty from Romish thralldom—were "slain" as to their papal existence, and arose to new life, as a great protestant confederacy, after a war of thirty-seven year's duration. Then terror seized the adherents of the papacy when they found such important triumphs obtained by protestants. "*The remnant were affrighted*"—this was the effect on the one party—but the other "*glorified the God of heaven.*"

And thus the sixth trumpet drew to its close. During its momentous blast we have seen eastern christendom overwhelmed by the desolating Turkish power; and the delusions of Mahomet, in the just dispensations of an angry God, exalted over the truth of the gospel in those lands where that truth was first preached, but where it was undervalued and abused. We have seen also western christendom enslaved under the spiritual thralldom of popery, and with the exception of a few witnessing protestors, sunk under the gross darkness of ignorant idolatry, till the light of the blessed reformation dawned, and the bible in the hands of a Luther shook to their centre the foundations of the realms of antichrist. We have seen, however, not all, but only a small proportion of the nations embracing the reformed faith, and escaping from the chains of error. The picture is still dark and gloomy. The witnesses are still prophesying in sackcloth. The angels of the trumpets are still sounding in vengeance. The second woe having passed, the third has quickly succeeded with its vials of judgment. The plagues of the French revolution have announced the terrors of the seventh and last trumpet to a guilty world. That trumpet even now continues to blow, but it must soon terminate; and then, at its final blast, when all opposing power is put down, the "great voices in heaven" shall proclaim, *"the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."*

Such is the termination of the successive chronological series of the seals and trumpets, bringing us down to the glorious era, now not far distant, of the "restitution of all things" at the coming of our Lord. But, as a writer of history, after setting

forth in order the great succession of events, frequently goes back to consider some of his subjects more distinctly and in detail ; so the prophet in his visions, having carried us forward to the final consummation, pauses to exhibit, in an enlarged and retrospective view, some of the more important matters which it was his office to reveal. These separate retrospective visions (which may be considered as the outer writings of that seven-sealed roll written "within and on the backside," chapter v., 1) we are now to meditate on.

## PART II.

### THE VISION OF THE DRACONIC CONFLICT—

#### CHAPTER XII.

*“There appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.”* We are here carried back to the historical crisis already represented in the sixth seal, when the Roman empire renounced paganism and made profession of christianity. By the emblem of a “woman,” Christ’s true orthodox church is to be understood, as distinguished from the false. The same contrast which elsewhere meets us between the “sealed tribes of Israel,” and the unsealed “rest of men”—between the “inner temple,” and the “outer court”—between “the holy city,” and “Babylon, or Sodom and Egypt”—is here presented in the woman, “the bride the lamb’s wife,” as contrasted with the false spouse, afterwards fully described as “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” At the time to which the vision refers, she was seen “clothed with the sun; that is, exalted to political eminence by the favour of the emperor Constantine; “with the moon under her feet,” the secondary authorities or senate of Rome being made subservient to her interests; “and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,” her bishops and clergy being recog-

nised as dignified ecclesiastics, and crowned with honour. This occurred in the year A.D. 313, when, by the Milan decree of Constantine and Licinius, christianity was established in all the European provinces of the Roman empire, though at the same time paganism prevailed in the Asiatic provinces, ruled over by Maximin. Then it was that the woman, ardent in her zeal for Christ, and in her love for the souls of men, "*being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*" Her earnest desire was to win souls to the Saviour; and, like one labouring in travail, she struggled for that happy issue. The language which St. Paul uses, in Gal. iv., 19, expressed her feelings, "my little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." And this her anxiety seems to have been in some degree repaid by the great accession of converts who at this time renounced heathenism and embraced the gospel. But, notwithstanding the change in her circumstances, she was not long exempt from trial. "*There appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*" Under this emblem, which always in scripture denotes a cruel heathen persecutor (see Isaiah xxvii., 1, li., 9; Ezek. xxix., 3), is depicted the hostile power of pagan Rome, on whose banners the ensign of a dragon was after the second century generally adopted, and now made the rallying point by Maximin for opposition to christianity. The seven heads and ten horns identify the emblem with the fourth beast

of Daniel's vision; and the explanation given by the angel to St. John, in chapter xvii., 9, unmistakably connects it with the one peculiar and easily recognised locality—namely the seven mountains on which Rome is built. Here, in its first aspect of a dragon, this Roman power is openly instigated by Satan in all the bloodthirstiness of heathen idolatry. When it meets us afterwards in the thirteenth and seventeenth chapters, in its aspect of a beast (see Psalm lxxiii., 22), it is no longer heathen, but in a state of apostacy from professed christianity. In both forms it is an adversary and opposer of the truth; but as to artful seducements and fatal snares of error, its last state is worse than its first. St. John beheld it here assaulting the woman and her seed, and descried in the symbol a repeated view of the great conflict that was to occur between paganism and christianity for the mastery of the world. The “casting down of the third part of the stars” (referring to the threefold division of the empire already specified) foreshowed the remarkable fact that, whilst the gospel was to be established in two-thirds, under Constantine and Licinius, the heathen idolatry was still to be in the ascendant in the remaining third under Maximin. It was only one-third, therefore, as the prophecy so accurately and remarkably foretells, that was to feel the dragon's influence crushing the religion of Christ, and shrouding the stars or rulers in pagan darkness. And thus the woman's travail, though sore beset with enemies, reached a successful issue. “*She brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up to God, and to his throne.*” The spiritual seed of the church, which is yet destined to judge the world (see 1. Cor. vi., 2; Rev. ii., 26, 27), and

which is even now made to sit in "heavenly places," (Eph. ii., 6), was by Constantine rightly deemed worthy to sit in the high places of the earth, and to hold offices of dignity in the empire. Theodosius went even farther, putting down paganism as if with a "rod of iron," and allowing no post of honour or authority to be filled by any but christians. But still the rage of the dragon continued unabated. The heathen party ceased not to oppose by every means in their power the progress of the gospel, and although the church was politically exalted in the state, yet that very exaltation proved the occasion for new and more crafty assaults of the enemy, to keep her in the condition of a mourner still. "*And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there twelve hundred and sixty days.*" This corresponds with the period already spoken of, and identifies the woman with the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth. "*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out and his angels were cast out with him.*" In the struggle which took place, the prophet describes not only the visible but the unseen leaders of the contending parties: on the one side, the spirits of darkness instigating the pagan rulers to oppose the gospel; on the other, Christ and his angels influencing the kings of the earth to become nursing fathers to the church. Licinius, the colleague of Constantine, who had formerly supported the cause of truth, now turned against it,



and headed the ranks of the heathens. But the prayers and faithfulness of the noble army of martyrs prevailed. Constantine defeated Licinius, and wrote, as if in illustration of this very prophecy, "That dragon has been deposed by God's providence." And then was "*heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down; which accused them before our God day and night, and they overcame him by the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death.*"

But now the other dangers referred to, which drove the woman into the wilderness, were developed more fully. No sooner was a check given to the dominance of paganism in the state, than the assaults of the enemy began to be put forth in a more subtle way. "*When the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.*" It was not by open heathenism, but by internal corruptions, that the peace of the church was next disturbed; and the evils thence arising proved the most injurious. Cruel were the wounds of the pagan persecutor, but much more cruel those inflicted by the men of her own household. Satan concealing himself amidst the worshippers in the temple, and putting forth, under the garb of christianity, now an Arius to deny the divinity of our Lord, and now a pope with his triple crown, to usurp his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices, was far more to be dreaded than when he incited a Nero or a Diocletian to shed torrents of christian blood. Such was the trial henceforth impending, whilst the woman was to "*fly into the*

wilderness for a time-times-and a half time (that is three and-a-half years, or twelve hundred and sixty days, Dan. vii., 25), *from the face of the serpent.*" During that period her "place" was to be sought, not under the shadow of the dome of St. Peter's, nor in the chambers of the Vatican—nor as identical with the visible catholic community (calling itself christian when it had become an apostacy, 1st Tim. iv., 1); but in "the wilderness," and secret retirements, where the hidden believers, known unto God alone, worshipped him that is a spirit in spirit and in truth. "*And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.*" This seems to point to the inundation of the barbarous nations, who, on their invasion of the empire, seemed likely to overwhelm the cause of Christ by their irreligious torrent of heathenism in the first instance, and afterwards of Arianism. But, "*the earth helped the woman.*" The Roman people upheld the orthodox faith against its adversaries. The victories of Belisarius and Narses over the Arian Ostrogoths checked the torrent; and then it was that the serpent, disappointed in his former plans, raised up the new and great foe—the ANTICHRIST, or pretended vicar of the Lord—who was to corrupt and vex the church during the rest of her militant career. When the Arian torrent failed, he went to "*make war with the remnant of the woman's seed*" by raising a papal corrupter to subvert the faith and ruin souls. In this form he presented that "masterpiece of Satan" which we have now to deal with, combining all evil influences in one, and exerting from the seven hills of Rome the worst opposition to Christ's cause and people which the world has ever seen, or shall see to the end.

## THE VISION OF THE RISE OF THE PAPACY.

(Chapter xiii.)—" *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*" We have already remarked the distinction between the dragon of the previous chapter and the beast of this. Both are identified by the same heads and horns as representing the Roman power; but the former represents it in its *pagan*, the latter in its *papal* form. This is evident, not only from the general tenor of the prophecy, but in particular from the position of the "crowns" (*diadems*). In the last chapter, they were upon *the heads*, referring to a period when the dominion of the emperors was still in existence. Here, they were upon *the horns*, pointing to a later period, when the empire was broken up by the Gothic invasions into the ten western European kingdoms (after A.D. 476), and the old Cæsarean sovereignty of Rome had merged into a new ecclesiastical despotism. "*The beast was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion*"—a monster compounded of all the previous three of Daniel's vision, and combining strength with cruelty and treachery. It was seen coming up from "the sea"—rising amidst the unsettled and turbulent scenes which took place on the disruption of the empire, when there was no rival at Rome to dispute the supremacy, and the so-called successor of St. Peter could easily persuade the multitude to look up to him as their ruler, not only in spiritual but in temporal matters. "*And upon his heads was the name of blasphemy;*" for, by pretending to be Christ's vicar, and claiming to forgive sins (see Mark ii., 7), he exhibited himself

a blasphemer in the worst sense, usurping the incommunicable attributes of God our Saviour. "*And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority ;*" that is, the pagan empire, on its overthrow, left the place vacant, and ceded all the influence and weight of its position in Rome to the papacy.\* The beast thus became the successor of the dragon—reviving, in a nominally christian form, all the idolatry which had distinguished the old empire of the seven hills. No sooner was the throne of the former monarchs empty than it was filled by a bishop who stiled himself the head of the catholic church, and as such claimed authority higher than the kings of the earth. "Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage," says the historian of the Decline and Fall, "the name of Rome must have perished, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honour." "The princes of the world," says another writer, "now adore and worship as perpetual dictator the successor not of Cæsar but of the fisherman Peter." This illustrates what St. John further describes in his vision. "*And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death ; and his deadly wound was healed.*" The seven heads

\* Let me here quote the remarkable language used by an Italian priest (Gavazzi), in an oration delivered in London, February, 1851.

"In the dust of paganism, the papacy picked up the words Pontifex Maximus, a fragment of imperial pretensions, and turned it to account, as it did other shreds and patches of idolatry. To the system of centralisation, of which the Roman empire was the mighty model, was traceable the notion of absorbing the whole christian episcopacy in one bishop. A primacy of order and simple precedency, freely granted towards the decline and fall of the Cæsars, was enlarged and expanded at their disappearance into the full inheritance of their autocracy ; and the good-will of the premises in which they carried on business passed into the hands of their successors with its concomitant monopoly."

of the beast\* being the same that appeared on the dragon, the last of them bore the marks of the fatal blow by which the dragon fell. That blow was inflicted, in a religious sense, in the overthrow of Licinius and of the other heathen rulers, and the conversion of the empire to christianity, and in a political sense, by the removal of the emperors from Rome to Constantinople, leaving the western world an easy prey to the Gothic invaders. But instead of the seventh draconic head, thus fatally wounded, a new one had sprouted up on the beast, which, though it might be called an eighth, in order of time (see chapter xvii., 10, 11), was in reality nothing but the seventh revived, and therefore "of the seven"—embodying afresh the principles of the extinct dragon, and presenting to the apostle's view, in that renovated head, including the whole beast, whose vitality centred in it, the aspect of a new monster occupying the place of the old, another and yet the same, being moved and directed by the same spirit of opposition to the truth. Behold, then, this wonderful and mysterious wound and recovery! The pagan Roman empire ceases; its paganism being abolished by Constantine and Theodosius, and its very existence brought to an end by the invading barbarians. But when this blow is inflicted on the last possessors of heathen authority at Rome, a restorer stands up in the person of the pope, and "*the deadly wound is healed.*" The dragon revives as a beast in a new form—his paganism reviving in the idolatrous practices of popery, and his supremacy reviving in the

\* It is to be observed that in these passages the original word beast (Θηριον) is quite different from the word used to express the four cherubic living creatures (Ζωα), chapter iv. It denotes a state of brutalised departure from God, as when Nebuchadnezzar lost a man's heart, and a beast's heart was given him (see Psalm lxxiii., 22).

dominion of the man who sits in the papal chair. "*And all the world wondered after the beast, and they worshipped the dragon who gave power to the beast;*" for by submitting to the authority of the papacy, they virtually did homage to the old serpent. "*And they worshipped the beast, saying, who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things* (compare Dan. vii., 25) *and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And all that dwell upon the earth* (that is, the great majority of professing christians, see Matt. iii., 5; Acts ix., 25) *shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" Strange, but nevertheless true, that a poor fallible mortal should thus succeed in investing himself with the divine prerogatives—setting himself up to be the vicergerent and representative of Christ on earth, and presuming to issue laws paramount to the laws of the Almighty! Great is the mystery of godliness, God making himself man; and great, on the other hand, is the mystery of iniquity, man making himself to be God!

But, in connection with this first beast, there is a second—the attendant and minister of the former, waiting upon him, and executing all his plans. "*I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns as a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*" This "false prophet," this "wolf in sheep's clothing" (see Matt. vii., 15; Rev. xix., 20), can mean nothing else than the corporation of Romish clergy, organised as soon as the papal supremacy was established, for the purpose of maintaining that supremacy inviolate. It arose out of the "earth," or

settled condition of things, after the "sea" of troubles (verse 1), consequent on the breaking up of the empire, had subsided. Its "two horns" are the secular and regular orders, the one comprising the common parish priests and curates—the other, the various monastic bodies, such as the Benedictines, Dominicans, Franciscans, &c., all bound together under one common obligation to propagate and uphold the system of the papacy. "*He exerciseth all the power of the first brast before him*"—is the agent for carrying out all his business, like a servant attending in his presence, and always ready to obey his will. "*And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of the miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast ; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had a wound by the sword, and did live.*" Pretended miracles, of which there are specimens in the impostures of winking madonnas, and bleeding pictures that are put forth even in the present day, and the claim of supernatural powers in transubstantiation, and absolution, and excommunication, whereby fire is supposed to be called down from heaven, as on the sacrifices of old (Lev. ix., 24 ; 1 Kings xviii., 38), attesting the divine presence with the Romish priesthood, have always been the means employed by them for working on the minds of the ignorant. And thus they induce the nations of the earth, at their bidding, to make an "image," before which all are to bow in abject prostration—an image, symbolical like the beast to which it belongs, but not the less an idol because it is spiritual and immaterial. Just as Nebuchadnezzar set up in the plains of the literal Babylon a

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literal image for men to worship on pain of death : so do these false guides set up in the mystical Babylon a mystical image to be worshipped under a similar penalty. . We can scarcely be wrong in explaining the "image" to be GENERAL COUNCILS, with their pretended infallible decrees : for this is the great idol of the Romish system, involving all the other idolatries in its train—uttering its voice as the voice of God, and claiming universal and complete submission. The people are said to make it, though the clergy have the chief hand in it, as the Israelites are said to have made the calf which Aaron made, because they consented and co-operated in the work : and it is called an image both "to" the beast, as intended for his honour, and "of" the beast, as representing his sentiments and mind. Professing to embody the views of the whole christian community, the councils have ever been, in reality, moved and directed by the pope's sole will and pleasure. To use the emphatic language of an Italian priest already referred to (Gavazzi), "the ambassadors of kings watched the doings of churchmen in general councils, but the people had neither organ or delegate there. The pope, by his rotten boroughs of bull-created bishops, *absorbed the whole representation of christendom* : and the proceedings at Trent were a gigantic show." The clergy, moreover, have "power to give life to this image, that it should both speak, and cause that as many as will not worship it should be killed." They boast that they have here a living, speaking judge of controversy, which in point of fact centres in the person of the priest, who becomes the arbitrar of conscience in the confessional, and sways the destinies of the people for time and eternity. And thus what is decreed in the canon law is not allowed to



remain a dead letter. It is brought home by the priestly agency in living and tangible reality to every house, and family, and individual that can be subjected to its influence. It "speaks," or issues it commands with the voice of a tyrant, and woe to those who venture to disobey. Let the "slaughtered saints whose bones lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold"—let the blood that flowed in torrents by the infamous Alva in the Netherlands—let the massacre of St. Bartholomew, in praise of which a medal was struck at Rome—let the fires of Smithfield—let the vaults of the inquisition—let the murders of protestants in Ireland—let the cannon planted against the defenceless queen of Tahiti—all bear witness that the rule of Rome's policy is that they who will not bow before her dogmas, and submit to the decrees of her councils, must be "*killed.*" "*And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast or the number of his name.*" Slaves of old used to be branded with the name of their masters, and the devotees of heathen Gods were frequently stamped with numerical letters symbolising the divinity to whom they belonged. Thus do the beast's adherents receive a name and a number to mark them as his slaves and devotees. This mark is either "in their foreheads," denoting his sincere and thorough votaries, or "in their hands," denoting those who, from motives of policy, lend themselves to his service. Taken as a number, the mark of the beast makes up in numerals "six hundred threescore and six." Taken as a name, it expresses the distinguishing character and position of the "man" referred to in the prophecy. "*And here,*" says St.

John, "*is wisdom.*" Here is a mystery illustrating the divine inspiration which foretold, and the spiritual discernment which deciphers this prediction. Find out a word in the Greek language—for it seems necessary that it should be in Greek, the language in which the apostle wrote, and in which other symbolic portions of the alphabet in this book are given (see chapter i., 8, xxii., 13), whose letters counted as numerals will amount to the specified sum, and the mystery is solved. The word ΔΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ, the Latin man, as suggested by Irenæus seventeen centuries ago, exactly answers the requirement. In numerals it is six hundred and sixty-six;\* and in name it expresses the unmistakable individual who occupies the Latin throne at Rome, the successor of the old Latin emperors, whose bulls and decrees are written in the Latin language, whose masses and services are performed in the Latin tongue, who usurps in Latin his title of papa or pope, who excommunicates in Latin those that protest against his errors, and blesses in Latin the idols which he sets up to be worshipped. And thus there can be no doubt, that all who follow this *Latin man's* religion—all who adhere to the decrees of his councils, and are guided by his traditions and pretended infallibility—all, in short, who identify themselves with his cause, either by open profession or by time-serving policy, *have the mark of the beast*; and, however that mark may profit them in worldly dealings of buying and selling now, it will be an awful mark to bear in the day when the final distinction shall be made between the adherents of Christ and Antichrist, and when the beast and false prophet shall meet their appointed doom (see chapter xiv., 9, 10, and xix., 20).

\* Viz.: Δ=30 Α=1 Τ=300 Ε=5 Ι=10 Ν=50 Ο=70 Σ=200.  
Total 666.

## THE VISION OF THE LAMB'S FAITHFUL COMPANY.

(Chapter xiv.)—“*And I looked, and, lo, a lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his father's name written in their foreheads.*” After the dark scenes of the previous chapter, we have here a view of the sealed company, the true catholic church, ranged under Christ, and marked with his father's name, as contrasted with the false catholic church, ranged under antichrist, and marked with the name of the beast. We had them before in the seventh seal, when the errors of popery were beginning to corrupt the earth. We have them again now at this brightening era of prophecy, when a vision is presented that evidently symbolises the glorious REFORMATION. St. John now “*heard as it were the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*” This “new song” seems to be the grand doctrine of justification, that was so little understood during the dark ages, but was proclaimed clearly and faithfully by the reformers. Luther dwells on it most forcibly: “learn,” he says, “to sing *the new song*, thou Jesus art my righteousness, I am thy sin; thou hast taken on thyself what was mine; thou hast given me what was thine.” And, as in the reformations in Judah, in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah, there were loud anthems of praise heard—so now the truths proclaimed by Luther, and Calvin, and Melancthon, and Cranmer, caused thanksgivings to abound as “the voice of many waters.” Yet not all who outwardly protest against Romish error can learn that song (for

it still holds good that "they are not all Israel who are of Israel"), but only the true and faithful company of the redeemed. These are they that are called "virgins," being undefiled by the spiritual fornications of the Babylonish harlot, following "the lamb" instead of following false guides; being a "first fruits," or consecrated portion of the human race, and "without fault before the throne of God," because clothed in the spotless righteousness of a redeemer. On this foundation the reformed churches rest. They acknowledge the Bible as the sole rule of faith. They hold justification only through the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ; and sanctification only through the indwelling influence of the Holy Spirit. They adhere to the gospel faithfully preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to the Lord's holy institution; and they join in a worship pure, simple, and spiritual, such as scripture approves. In England, in Scotland, in various parts of the continent of Europe, in America, and in the islands of the sea, such churches have been planted; and amidst all the imperfections which attach to human things, they are still God's witnesses in whom he is glorified. Their work is a missionary work. They are called on to be the "lights of the world, holding forth the word of life"—to proclaim "the mystery of godliness," as contrasted with "the mystery of iniquity"—to disseminate the pure doctrines of Christ, as contrasted with antichristian corruptions—to teach the spiritual worship of the Almighty Creator instead of the worship of images—to exalt the mediation of the Redeemer instead of the mediation of saints and angels—and thus to prepare the way of the Lord, and make ready a people to meet him at his coming. In the errand of the three

angels sent forth with their messages to mankind, we have an intimation of all this. The first flies "in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth." The second follows, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." And the third proclaims, "if any man worship the beast or his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." All these angel-announcements show that the churches are to be employed in proclaiming their Redeemer's message of truth throughout the world, in opposition to every form of error. In particular, they are to cry *no peace with Rome*: and though the conflict in which they thus engage seem to be severe and trying, and the more so as the final termination draws near, yet they must persevere. Happy are they that endure to the end, for they shall be saved. It is here that the precious text comes in which has been the comfort of many an afflicted mourner in the dying struggle—a text whose consolations will not fail in the last conflicts of the church and her foes. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

And what comes next after the testimony of the churches is ended? Hear it in the words of St. John, "*I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*" This is the appearing of the Lord for judgment. The sickle is to be put forth, the tares are to be divided from the wheat, and the precious seed from the chaff. And then follows the awful treading of the "*wine press of the wrath of God*"

—compare *Is. lxiii.*, 3; *Joel iii.*, 12—14. So that this chapter, like the eleventh, the sixteenth, and the nineteenth, carries us to the final winding up of the history of the church and of the world, and enforces on all the solemn warning, “watch ye, therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape those things which are coming to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

#### THE VISION OF THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES.

(Chapter xv. and xvi.)—At the close of the first series of chronological prophecies in chap. xi., 19, where we were brought to the millennial era of Christ's reign over the earth, at the sound of the seventh trumpet, we read that “there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail,” proceeding out of the temple of God in heaven. That temple with its tokens of wrath is here again referred to. The apostle takes up, in chapter xv., 5, what he had been saying before in chapter xi., 19, and now fully describes the seven last plagues (included in the seventh trumpet) which were to bring about the downfall of antichrist, and usher in the triumph of the Redeemer.

FIRST VIAL (chapter xvi., 2)—“The noisome and grievous sore” here poured forth seems exactly to agree with the breaking out of that most awful plague which the world ever saw—the French revolution in 1789. Infidelity, and the casting off of all the restraints of religion, became the natural consequence of a recoil from the extreme of superstition and priestcraft amongst an excitable and demoralised people: and fearful was the reaction when a nation, long enslaved in the chains of popery, burst its bonds, not to assert its christian liberty, but to plunge into the op-

posite extreme of anarchy and ungodliness. Such was the "sore" which fell upon France (called by the pope his most christian kingdom), and radiating from thence as a centre, affected more or less the other countries of Europe where the papal system had been for ages predominant, and where the guilty inhabitants rejecting the word of God, and following human traditions, having "sown the wind" were doomed to "reap the whirlwind."

SECOND VIAL (verse 3).—The whole framework of society having been broken up, and all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, being involved in confusion, so that the state of France resembled the troubled sea whose waters cannot rest; the spirit of bloodthirstiness, like a satanic fiend, in just retribution by an angry God, was permitted to infuse itself into the hearts of men, hardening them against every feeling of humanity, and poisoning every charity of life, till the whole land was overwhelmed with a flood of carnage and murder in which upwards of two millions perished—every one seemingly helping (as in the case of Moab and Ammon of old) "to destroy another."

THIRD VIAL (verse 4).—"Rivers and fountains of waters" are fit emblems of the ruling powers in church and state, which in a settled order of society ought to move on quietly and steadily, diffusing streams of blessing to the community. But here those streams had been corrupted at the fountain head. The kings and magistrates, instead of repressing wickedness, had encouraged it; and the priests, instead of leading the people in the paths of true religion, had taught them the ways of falsehood. No wonder, therefore, that the rulers of France suffered in the general bloodshed—whilst more than twenty-four thousand of the clergy were slain. In this, too, there was a plain manifestation of righteous

vengeance—"they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink for they are worthy. Even so, Lord God almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." In the place where a papal king and his family had gloated their eyes with the slaughter of the Huguenots, and mocked the dying agonies of those murdered servants of the Lord, a succeeding papal king and his family were led to prison and to death, reviled and taunted by crowds of savage persecutors; and in the place where Romish ecclesiastics had directed the slaughter of St. Bartholomew's eve, and other barbarities, hundreds and thousands of the same order were themselves goaded on by infuriated mobs to similar destruction. Thus, "they that killed with the sword perished by the sword:" and however the mind shudders at the revolutionary madness of the period to which the vial refers, the hand of a holy avenging God must be recognised in it all.

FOURTH VIAL (verse 8)—"The sun" is the emblem of imperial sovereignty—and there is here an evident prediction of the emperor Napoleon's blood-stained career. Smiting the earth as with a sun stroke, "*there was power given him to scorch men with fire: and men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God which had power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.*" For more than ten years the withering glare of this baleful luminary brought perplexity and terror on the countries of the continent; and what was said of Attila before, might well be said of him also—that he was the "scourge of God." The nations that were sunk in the corruptions of popery chiefly felt the effects of his ruinous ambition; but they were not thereby brought to repentance.



After the termination of his course by the battle of Waterloo—when peace and order again visited the plains of Europe, so long accustomed to commotion and war—not one among the nations, alas ! renounced their errors for a purer faith, or turned from their evil ways to glorify God.

FIFTH VIAL (verse 10)—“The seat of the beast” here mentioned, or more literally his “throne,” as in chapter xiii., 2, is evidently Rome ; and the pouring out of the vial on it points to the troubles in which that metropolis of antichristendom has been involved since the revolution of 1789 began to shake the realm of the papacy, and to give good grounds for supposing that the twelve hundred and sixty years of its tyranny then reached at least a primary termination. Ever since that time, what has the pope been ? Sometimes a prisoner, detained from his boasted infallible chair in chains—sometimes a fugitive, flying from the indignant populace of Rome in disguise—always a suspicious and unhappy tyrant, spending his time in constant fear of the poisoned cup or the assassin’s dagger—and, though he speaks as proudly as ever, and publishes his great swelling bulls of blasphemy against the word and cause of God, upheld only on his throne by the protection of foreign guards, and the policy of neighbouring states, that see in his system of false religion an instrument adopted for sustaining their own unhallowed sway. Nor have the effects of this vial yet ceased. Even now we see his kingdom full of darkness—of spiritual, moral, and intellectual darkness—just as it is here described. Wherever the dominant power of popery prevails, there is ignorance, mental bondage, irreligion, and vice. The poor degraded people feel their thralldom, yet have not learned in the Bible the secret of

true liberty. "They gnaw their tongues for pain," because they know not that Saviour who alone enables the weary and heavy laden to find rest to their souls. "They blaspheme the God of heaven, and repent not"—because the system in which they have been trained is one of blasphemy, and substitutes penance for repentance, and slavish dread for holy love. And symptoms are not wanting to show that, in their agonies of despair, some terrible convulsion among the Roman populace will probably soon plunge the seat of the beast in greater troubles than ever, and force the pope, perhaps, to change his residence and seek some other throne.

SIXTH VIAL (verse 12).—This vial has reference not to the western world like the previous ones, but to *the eastern*. It foretells a gradual wasting away of the power already described under the sixth trumpet, the Turkish or Othman power, which after overflowing the lands, like the river Euphrates on whose banks it originated, was now to be dried up and brought to a state of weakness and inanity. Another prophecy in Daniel viii. (where the same power is symbolised by the little horn of the goat, rising out of one of the four broken parts of the empire of Alexander the Great), points to the same termination, and brings it to the same period. For the whole duration of Daniel's vision, from its commencement to its close, including the rise and progress of the Mahomedan hosts towards the latter end of the existence of the dismembered Grecian dynasties, in the regions where the successors of Alexander had ruled, but where the traces of former greatness were fast vanishing away, is stated to be two thousand three hundred days, or years (Dan. viii., 14). Now, taking the vision to commence in the year before Christ

480, when the Persian Ram began to "push westward, and northward, and southward," by the progress of the splendid army of Xerxes, so famed in ancient history, we shall have the close of the two thousand three hundred years brought to A. D. 1820. And if we ask what remarkable events connected with the Othman history occurred about that period? The answer is, 1stly—the revolt of Ali Pasha and Greek insurrection of 1820, when some of their chief European provinces were wrested from the Turks and erected into a separate kingdom. 2ndly—the awful massacre of the Janizzaries at Constantinople in 1826, when thirty thousand of the sultan's bravest defenders were put to death. 3rdly—the war between Russia and the Porte in 1829, which crippled the strength of the latter, and forced him to agree to most humiliating conditions of peace. 4thly—the defeat of the Turks and Arabs by the French army in Africa, which dried up their sources of power in that quarter, and made Algiers a colony of France. 5thly—the rebellion of the great Egyptian pasha, Mehemet Ali, in 1832. And lastly, the depopulating judgments of God on the Turkish dominions by earthquake, famine, and pestilence. All these causes combined render the Othman empire at present a mere shadow of what it once was. Since 1820, the waters of this mystic Euphrates have been failing, and its exhaustion gradually going forward; and we may soon look for the "cleansing of the sanctuary," when that holy land, where the feet of Christ and his apostles trod, and those regions of the earth where the gospel was first planted shall no more be defiled by "the transgression of desolation" which has so long triumphed over the christian cause.\*

\* The duration of Mahomet's imposture, as well as of the papal, is evidently included in the "time, times, and a half time" of Dan. xii., 7. So

All this process, moreover, is preparatory to a certain end—*“that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared”*—referring either to the conversion and restoration of the Jewish people to their own land, or to the gathering in of Gentile kings and princes from the east to worship the Lord in his holy mount at Jerusalem, both of which events are clearly foretold in various passages of scripture. Whatever be the meaning, it will not be long till these kings of the east shall be manifested; for the vial brings us to our own immediate days, predicting much that our own ears have already heard and our own eyes have already seen; and the complete fulfilment, now not far distant, will explain the rest.

#### THE THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS LIKE FROGS.

(Verse 13.)—At this period of the prophetic history, St. John saw in his vision, *“three unclean spirits, going forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”* These spirits are compared to frogs because of their loathsomeness and noisiness; and also because, like the frog-plague of Egypt, they cover the land with their defilement, insinuating themselves everywhere—into royal courts and private chambers, and all the recesses both of public and of domestic life. They are said also to be *“the spirits of devils working miracles,”* to show the source whence they derive their influence, and the extraordinary success with which they carry out their plans—not, of course, from any really miraculous energy, but from something which in the eyes of the  
that, as the career of the two great enemies of the truth, in east and west, commenced together (say about A.D. 606), they are both destined to fall together.

ignorant passes for supernatural power—an inspiration drawn not from heaven but from hell—whereby they withstand the cause of God (as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses), and delude the infatuated kings of the earth, like Pharoah, to their own destruction. The first of these evil spirits proceeds “*out of the mouth of the dragon*”—that old serpent which instigated the opposition of pagan Rome of old against christianity—which excited the blasphemy and infidelity of the Diocletians, and Maximins, and Julian’s of former days; and which, under the emblem of the seven-headed and ten-horned monster described in the twelfth chapter, fought the battle of heathenism until it was cast down. This principle then we would specify as INFIDELITY, or, in other words, impiety towards God, and turbulent lawlessness towards men, such as existed in the Roman world during the dragon’s reign. And surely at the present time the proceedings of the socialists in England, the communists in France, and the secret clubs in Germany, afford too abundant evidence that it is even now abroad, and working with malignant influence throughout the earth. The horrid blasphemies which are uttered by these men, and diffused by a depraved press, and the proud rebelliousness with which they set themselves to overthrow religion, order, and every restraint, human and divine, sufficiently show the prevalence of this primary ingredient in the cup of confusion which is preparing to convulse the world.

The second evil spirit proceeds “*out of the mouth of the beast*,” and is doubtless the spirit of POKERY, which is working with increased energy to deceive and delude the nations. In all the countries of Europe (our own alas! not excepted), and in the distant quarters of America and Asia, the croaking of this ill-

omened frog is loudly heard. Its missions are sent forth ; its bishops and priests are multiplied ; its jesuit and monastic institutions are established ; and its cardinal princes are appointed to bear rule in every land. In short, it is now leaving no effort untried to secure universal ascendancy ; scrupling not, for the furtherance of its objects, even to join in alliance (as the prophecy here describes it) with infidelity, and though in heart a tyrant, to wear the mask of democratic liberalism, according to the times and characters with which it has to do.

The third evil spirit issues from "*the false prophet*"—from that two-horned lamb-like beast mentioned in chapter xiii., representing the hierarchy and clergy of the church, playing into the hands of the first beast, but yet distinct from him, and capable of existing in other communities as a species of popery even without a pope. This spirit may be called by the general name of HIGH CHURCHISM or PRIESTCRAFT. It is known, wherever it exists, by substituting the church for Christ, and sacraments for the Saviour. It intrudes on the exclusive and untransferable priesthood of the Son of God, and arrogates to mortal man, by virtue of a supposed apostolic succession, the power of dispensing those blessings which he, as a Prince and a Saviour, alone is exalted to bestow. Thus teaching the world to look up to priests and clergy as the keepers of conscience and mediators of salvation, it closes the bible, destroys private judgment, and opens the door for all manner of will-worship, superstition, and ungodliness. Here, too, the experience of our own, as well as of other countries, abundantly testifies that such an evil spirit, in conjunction with the other two, is now abroad. Tractarianism, or high churchism, is turning away multitudes from the simplicity of

gospel truth—and making the religion of forms stand in the place of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And on the whole, surveying the state of the world at this present time, we can scarcely fail to perceive in it an exact fulfilment of the prophetic declarations, and to recognise the three great predicted principles of evil—INFIDELITY, POPERY, and HIGH CHURCHISM—even now gathering the nations to the final conflict, the “battle of the great day of God Almighty.”

What the circumstances of that battle may be—how the hosts shall be marshalled, and what previous events may usher it in—we presume not to conjecture. One thing however is plain—that the influences are already in active operation which are preparing the kings of the earth and their armies to bid defiance to the sacred cause of Christ's pure and holy gospel—and coming just at their appointed time, at the pouring out of the sixth vial, under which we have for some thirty years been living, they loudly call upon us to stand on our watch, and see that the last great crisis does not take us by surprise. Deeply solemn is the warning which the Lord at this peculiar moment gives—“*behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.*”

When the officer of the temple at Jerusalem went his nightly rounds, if he found any of the watchmen asleep at his post, he stripped the faithless sentinel of his garments and left him naked and disgraced; so shall it be with those whom the Lord when he cometh shall not find watching. Their doom is written, “shame and everlasting contempt.” And how soon the final decision may burst on an affrighted world, who can tell? At the commencement of the seventh vial (and let us recollect that

we are now at the close of the sixth), "*the great voice out of the temple in heaven proclaims, It is done.*" The final earthquake, the destruction of great Babylon, the tempest of divine vengeance, that shall fall like a storm of hail on the heads of the wicked—all these things accompany that last predicted vial poured out "on the air," and producing the convulsions which none but he who brought order out of chaos in the beginning can rectify and overrule for permanent good. And this is just the "*dignus vindice nodus*"—the crisis worthy of Deity—that will require and obtain the interference of the Lord from heaven to maintain his own cause and establish his own glorious kingdom (see Ezek. xxi., 27). Then, when the rightful sovereign shall obtain possession of the earth which sin has so long defiled, all will at length be well. "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

#### THE VISION OF THE HARLOT OF BABYLON.

(Chapter xvii.)—The interpretation of this vision has already been in a great degree anticipated in our remarks on chapter xiii. It is the same identical beast which meets us in both chapters; only here it appears more fully covered with names of blasphemy, and carries along with it in indissoluble connection to the end, the woman that corrupts the earth with her fornications, and whose name is written, "*mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.*" As the body of the monster represents the papal realm of the ten western European kingdoms, and its head the succession of Roman popes, so the female rider represents the papal see under its title of Babylon,



the original city of confusion in Nebuchadnezzar's image, and in its character of mother church of apostate christendom. Lest we should have any doubt about the original of the picture, the locality to which it belongs, and the historical associations connected with it, are plainly described (verse 9). "*The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, and there are seven kings.*" Here is a double mark. The seven hills of Rome show where we are to look for the harlot, and the seven kinds of government, through which that city has passed, serve for positive identification. With respect to this latter particular, if we count from the beginning, we find that there have been at Rome, exercising supreme authority at various times as governing heads—1st, *kings*—2ndly, *consuls*—3rdly, *dictators*—4thly, *decemvirs*—5thly, *military tribunes*. These "*five*" were "*fallen*" at the time when St. John wrote. The *sixth*, or imperial head, was then in existence in the line of the Cæsars, and continued till the time of Diocletian, about the end of the third century, when a change again occurred. Instead of the former sole imperial sovereignty, the principle of division was introduced by Diocletian, vesting the supreme power in *two Augusti and two Cæsars*. He also adopted the Asiatic *diadem*, as the emblem of despotic authority, instead of the old imperial *crown*—and commenced the separation of the court and government of Rome from the court and government of the eastern part of the empire; thus paving the way for the dissolution of the Roman world. So remarkable was this change that Gibbon the historian says, "like Augustus, Diocletian may be considered as the founder of a new empire;" and in his historical index, speaking of the same period, he thus refers to it—

"Diocletian assumes the diadem and introduces the Persian ceremonial. New form of administration." Here then we have "*the seventh head*," or *imperio-tetrarchical*, which was to "*continue for a short space*"—short indeed, inasmuch as within twenty or thirty years after this quadripartite division and assumption of the diadem, Constantine removed the government to Constantinople, paganism was overthrown, and the mighty fabric of the old Roman power in the west crumbled to decay. Gibbon says, "soon after this (Diocletian's triumph in 303) the emperors ceased to vanquish, and Rome ceased to be the capital of the empire." It was under this last or seventh head that the heathen Roman dragon (as represented in chapter xii.) fell with a blow as if of a sword. That blow was inflicted, religiously, in the abolition of heathen worship by Constantine and Theodosius, and politically, in the breaking up of the empire by the Goths; and it was going on in successive strokes from A.D. 324 to 455. But, by and by, "the deadly wound was healed." A new head arose in place of the seventh that was cut down. This head was the pope, exalting himself on the ruins of the old sovereignty, and becoming under a new and ecclesiastical form the occupant of the throne of the Cæsars. Though in succession an "*eighth*," it was in reality "*of the seven*," as being the substitute for the former seventh wounded to death. And the whole beast, included under this revived head (just as the Babylonian empire was included under Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. ii., 38, "thou art this head of gold"), is called "*the beast which was and is not and yet is*." It "*was*," when, in its pagan form, it existed under the emblem of the dragon. It "*is not*," now that the dragon's existence

has been cut off and paganism dethroned. And yet it "*is*," the old draconic spirit having revived in the system of the papacy. As to the ten horns, they are said to be "*ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet* (in St. John's time) *but receive power as kings one hour* (or, at one and the same hour) *with the beast.*" Now it is certain that ten kingdoms arose in the territory of the old western empire at the same time as the papacy, say about the year A.D. 530, principally formed by the Gothic invaders from the north who had overrun the more southerly regions of Europe. These kingdoms have been enumerated by many writers, and with little variation their list may be set down as follows:—1st, the Anglo-Saxons in Britain—2ndly, the Franks—3rdly, the Allemans—4thly, the Burgundians in France—5thly, the Suevi in Portugal—6thly, the Visigoths in Spain—7thly, the Bavarians—8thly, the Vandals—9thly, the Ostrogoths—10thly, the Lombards in Italy. Of these ten, the three last were "plucked up by the roots" (see Dan. vii., 8) by the conquests of Belisarius, Pepin, and Charlemagne, and most of their territory conferred on the pope as the states of the church and patrimony of St. Peter. The rest compose the other principal states of Europe to this present day. They have generally submitted to popery, and "*given their power and strength to the beast*" (with the exception of "the tenth part of the city" chapter xi., 13, which fell away from him at the reformation), and they shall be found under his dangerous guidance, "*making war with the lamb,*" to their own ruin at the final conflict of Armageddon. As to what is said about their "*hating the whore, and making her desolate and naked, and eating her flesh, and burning her*

*with fire,"* we have seen it fulfilled in the wars of the French revolution, when so many of the continental nations exhibited a hatred of popery, and were leagued together in the spoliation of the Romish church, and the humbling of the papal see. This tearing and desolating of the whore, however, was only temporary. It was not intended to be the means of her final destruction—a work which God has reserved for his own hand. The quarrel between the parties has been made up, and, outwardly at least, there is agreement again. The woman is still *"that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth ;* and at her downfall they shall *"lament"* over her, because she has ministered to their pleasures, ambition, and misrule. But all is nevertheless tending to the appointed close—*"for God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."*

## CONCLUSION.

Having traced the prophecies of this wonderful book up to the present period as they have been accomplished, and are illustrated by the light of history, we ask the reader to pause and meditate on a few concluding reflections:—

1st—WHAT A CONVINCING PROOF IS THUS AFFORDED OF THE INSPIRATION AND TRUTH OF GOD'S HOLY WORD, WHOSE PROPHETICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS HAVE BEEN SO STRIKINGLY FULFILLED IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD, AND ARE IN PROGRESS OF FULFILMENT BEFORE OUR OWN EYES TO THIS HOUR!

2ndly—WHAT A WARNING IS HELD OUT TO ALL MEN TO BEWARE OF THE DELUSIONS OF POPERY—THAT GREAT FOE OF GOD AND HIS CAUSE, WHICH OCCUPIES SO CONSPICUOUS A PLACE IN THE PROPHETIC DENUNCIATIONS, AND WHICH, EVEN IN ITS PRESENT ARROGANT PRETENSIONS TO UNIVERSAL SWAY, IS ONLY RUSHING FORWARD THE MORE MANIFESTLY TO ITS FINAL DOOM!

And 3rdly—WHAT A SOLEMN LESSON IS TAUGHT OF OUR NOW LIVING IN THE VERY LAST STAGE OF THE WORLD'S EXISTENCE; OF THE END OF ALL THINGS BEING AT HAND; AND OF THE NEAR APPROACH OF CHRIST'S COMING AND KINGDOM!

With respect to the exact time of the great consummation, "of that day and hour knoweth no man;" but when we reflect on the signs of the times here brought to light—when we survey the landmarks of prophetic history which have been already passed—when we see that the seven seals have been opened—that the seven trumpets have sounded—that six of the last vials have been poured out—that the three unclean spirits are abroad marshalling the hosts for the final conflict—and *that only the seventh vial remains to issue its plagues before the end come*, (chapter xvi., 17)—we have surely reason to gird our loins, and trim our lamps, and prepare to meet the bridegroom. As to the events which may still be expected to conclude the history of the world (detailed in the xviii. and two following chapters of the revelation), though we may be permitted to form a general idea of what is to occur, the manner and particulars of the fulfilment, time alone will disclose. Some signal judgment, we know, is to overtake Babylon—that great city which includes not only the material walls of Rome, but the whole fabric of error so long identified with the seven hills. The kings of the earth with their armies, in alliance with the beast, shall afterwards be gathered together in some impious confederacy (at Jerusalem, as it would appear, from Ezek. xxxviii.; Joel iii.; and Ezek. xiv.): and "the Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle," "and the beast shall be taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him; these both shall be cast alive into the lake of fire." Then shall follow the MILLENNIUM, or thousand years' reign of Christ and his risen saints in the new Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven—answering to what is com-

monly called the day of judgment—that day of the Lord, which “is as a thousand years”—that day which had its type in the reigns of the judges of Israel, whose business was not merely to pass sentence on characters, but by a long-continued process to bring order out of confusion, and retrieve the ruined and desperate affairs of the land. So shall Christ, the true judge, during the millennial period cause the disorders of sin to be rectified, and reign as king of righteousness and peace over the whole world. Satan's power shall be restrained, the prevalence of wickedness shall meet an universal check, the restored Jews and the Gentile nations shall be converted to the truth, the lower ranks of creation shall rejoice, and the earth be rescued from the curse under which, for six thousand years, it has been groaning. And when, after a last convulsive effort of Satan and those whom he has deceived, the final act of judgment shall have taken place, and death and hell been cast into the lake of fire—when Christ shall have put down all opposing rule, and authority, and power, and delivered up the kingdom perfectly purged from every stain of sin into his father's hands—then shall the sons of God who shouted for joy at creation's birth prolong a more exulting anthem, and the song of the new Jerusalem shall be the universal song echoing from the redeemed earth for all eternity. “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” Well may the christian, with such a glorious prospect before him, be ready to exclaim with St. John, “even

so, come Lord Jesus !” At present iniquity prevails, and ungodliness is in the ascendant. Satan, with his legion of evil spirits, occupies the air around us, and works in the children of disobedience. In fact, “all the foundations of the earth are out of course.” But it shall not be so always. A few more trials may yet remain to the people of God ; a few more stormy and cloudy days of sin and sorrow ; but a bright and happy scene is surely to succeed. He that sits upon the throne shall say, “behold I make all things new.” “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death.” Let every reader examine himself as to his hopes and character—whether he has fled for refuge to lay hold of the rock of ages, and has taken shelter from the wrath to come in the on’y name under heaven given among men whereby a sinner can be saved—whether a Redeemer’s atoning blood and meritorious righteousness is his ground of security—and whether he is proving himself in his life and conduct, through the quickening and sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, a partaker of that “holiness without which none shall see the Lord !” This is the test which decides the momentous question of happiness or misery for eternity. And God grant that he who writes, and they who read this tract, may in the great approaching day of Christ’s second coming, be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless, hailing our master’s appearing with joy, and singing the glad psalm of praise



even amidst the wrecks of a dissolving world, "God! our refuge and strength, our very present help in trouble: therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!"

FINIS.





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